

ENGINE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

There was a time when the outside world, especially the development nations used to call India as a nation of snake-charmers, as there was no development and literacy at that time. Moreover, as majority people of the country were living in rural areas and dependent on farming or other allied sectors for their livelihood, without having knowledge about education and its benefits, the development pace was quite low. But, right from the very first day of taking over the charge of office, the ruling Government has been working hard to transform the country in almost every sector. During last more than 8 years, the present Government, with its proactive measures has brought in a complete change in the working system, which nation moving towards growth and prosperity and touching pinnacles of growth. While speaking during Vyapari Udyami Sammelan in New Delhi, the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal also stated that the world now sees India as an engine of economic growth. Stressing that India enjoyed confidence of the world, Goyal said that developed countries very keen to sign trade deals with India now. He added that before 2014, Indian economy was considered to be fragile and investors had their doubts about doing business with India. Stressing upon the need for transparency and ease of doing business, the Minister assured traders and entrepreneurs that the Government will fully support traders who raise their voice against harassment by any authority. He called upon traders to work with the Government to reduce compliance burden of people and businesses, but asked that they strictly follow ethical trade practices. Unnecessary, cumbersome and counter-productive laws and regulations must be uprooted to improve ease of doing business, he added. He asked traders to give priority to the quality of goods and services that India offered. He also underscored the need to encourage youngsters to come forward and lend a youthful energy to India's growth story with new ideas. The clarion call of 'vocal for local' given by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi must be taken up by the youth of the nation, the Minister said. He added that we must also encourage more and more women to become traders and entrepreneurs. Applauding Prime Minister's visionary welfare policies, Goyal said that these policies have been helping the poor emerge as consumers and have successfully transformed India's population into its greatest strength. He added that the Prime Minister's tireless work had ensured that every household in the country gets access to basic amenities such as cooking gas, drinking water, electricity and toilet and every village gets access to the internet. Goyal said that the policies of the government had also given every Indian the courage to be ambitious and the confidence to aspire to become entrepreneurs. The Minister also emphasized that traders and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) should benefit from demand of goods by beneficiaries of the Prime Minister's welfare schemes. He asked all traders, entrepreneurs, and businesses, both big and small, to take a collective resolve to work together to take forward the dream of a self-reliant India by promoting more and more Indian products.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Sanyas, Celibacy And God

There are three stages of life. First comes sanyas, renunciation, which means complete surrender through evaporation of ego. But, so long as there is life there is ego. You cannot do without it. You can only take it as His ego. Your mind then becomes manjari, budding seed. The picture of a new born baby in the mother's lap typifies sanyas.

Then comes the stage of brahmacharya, celibacy, when one lives in and through Him and feels His presence in every experience. True sanyas is a sort of subconscious behaviour or reflex action. And real brahmacharya is conscious perception of one reality through the manifold of existence.

While sanyas displays unconscious will and brahmacharya evinces conscious feeling, the stage grihastha is marked by complete merger in thought, feeling and will. The real grihastha is He, Himself, who dwells in this tenement of clay.

Actually, sanyas is the state of one who is self-poised, one who has no ego attachments.

Sanyas in the true sense of the term, implies the total annihilation of ego and identification with the Supreme I-Consciousness absolutely in everyday life. The five senses also surrender completely to the Self. Sanyas is possible only when life ceases. A living being cannot be a sanyasi.

Real renunciation, sanyas, is to be shorn of ego and to be in svabhava, a natural state of attunement with the Supreme. We are all purna kumbhas, pitchers full of Him. To install this Consciousness in our empiric being is the only necessity. Picking pockets is much better than the business of sadhus and sanyasis, holy people and renunciates. The whole host of them so-called sadhus propose to lead us to the Fountain Source. But, in fact, they are leading us to perdition. Neither the sad-

hu and sannyasis, nor the pundits, intellectuals, know anything.

Renunciation and self-denial enlarge the ego and do not eliminate it. They create vanity, a vanity of calculated achievement, a vanity of having a distinct position in society. Complete and silent surrender to Him without any exhibitionism is the only path. Renunciates project their vanity, which leads to complete darkness. A little exhibition of power is of no avail so far as realisation of Truth is concerned.

The world is His. Every object, from the moon and stars, to the sun that shines to dispel darkness and give life and joy is His handiwork. So what does one renounce? And, for what? There is no escape from His creation, it encompasses one from all sides. God is available here and now, anywhere and everywhere.

Saffron robes and vows of celibacy are against the law of nature. When I am born, brought up and leave my body in the lap of nature, how can I deny her demands? For instance, a soldier goes to the battlefield and is determined to fight with the enemy. Suppose he flies away from that place out of fear. He then is in the same boat with the so-called sanyasi, renunciate, who tries to escape the burdens of family life to avoid the pangs of prarabdha, destined unfolding process of life.

Brahmacharya does not mean not using sexual organs. It means to be in Him. What does sexual intercourse stand for? Absorption, relishing His rasa, tasting His love.

Being a saint or a monk has nothing to do with God but is only acceptance by tradition. Sadhus and yogis avoid responsibilities of natural life and become escapist, ritualists, and achieve nothing. You cannot leave His creation and find Him elsewhere, can you?

Ananya Roy Chowdhury

What people think in their heart gets out, no matter how much they try to hide it.

-Munshi Premchand

EDITORIAL

Spreading menace of parthenium in J&K

■ DR BANRSI LAL

Every year 16-22 of August is observed as Parthenium Awareness Week in India. The objective of celebration of this week is to create awareness among the farmers and general public about the menace of Parthenium. This obnoxious weed is responsible to cause many health problems to the human beings and animals and deteriorating environment, effecting crop productivity and biodiversity. This year we are celebrating the 17th Parthenium Awareness Week from 16-22 August, 2022. Various activities such as uprooting of Parthenium, spraying herbicides, releasing Mexican beetles, composting of uprooted biomass, demonstrations, rallies etc are organised by the various institutions across the country.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is also celebrating this week with full zeal and enthusiasm and various agricultural institutions/departments are creating awareness on Parthenium management among the masses.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is situated in the Northern most part of India and its major part is situated in the Himalayan region. J&K is blessed with immense natural beauty and is considered as the heaven on the Earth. Most of its land is under orchards, pastures, grasslands, forests and wasteland ecosystems.

As most of these lands are not used for frequent cultivation, the obnoxious weed like Parthenium hysterophorus (Congress grass) has invaded most of these lands. Parthenium weed is regarded as the worst weed because of its invasiveness, potential for spread and economic and environmental hazards.

This invasive weed is presently found in almost all the parts of J&K causing a serious threat to the biodiversity of this beautiful part on the Earth.

This weed is considered as the dominant weed in J&K as it has covered almost all the fellow lands, river beds wastelands, pasture lands, grasslands etc.

It is a noxious weed because it is highly adaptable to almost all types of environmental conditions and can invade all types of lands, causes high losses in the yield of crops.

This weed forms dense, impenetrable thickets and reduces the productivity of crops, pastures, orchards and forestry plantations by its competition for resources and allopathic effects.

The low crops production and productivity due to this weed leads to scarcity of food, fuel wood, fodder, fruits, increase in monkey menace and migration of rural people to urban areas in search of employment after leaving the land fal-

low.

About 80 per cent of population of Union Territory of J&K directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. People of J&K fulfill their subsistence needs from cultivated, uncultivated and degraded lands. Crops production and productivity can be enhanced in J&K by the management of this problematic weed with the effective technologies. It can be seen on roadside, railway tracks, vacant lands, wastelands, agricultural, horticultural and plantation crops, industrial areas, irrigation canals etc. in almost every district of the Union Territory of J&K.

There is need to understand the biology of this obnoxious weed, its ecological impacts and management techniques. This troublesome weed has high rate of dispersal and adaptation to adverse conditions.

About 30 per cent of the land of J&K is under cultivation. This weed is now spreading rapidly its tentacles in agricultural lands, forests and pastures. It is spreading at an alarming rate in the J&K and is found in almost all the districts of J&K.

This weed is inversely affecting the biodiversity and ecological system of the J&K. It is said that it was introduced in Jammu and Kashmir in 1963 from Madhopur in Punjab across the Ravi River all along the national highway.

After that it has been dispersed in all over the state. Presently its infestation is alarming as it has covered large area in J&K.

It has been observed that this weed has reduced different crops yields and has also affected biodiversity in the Union Territory of J&K.

Parthenium hysterophorus (Congress grass) is commonly known as carrot weed as its plant appears like carrot plant.

It is herbaceous, an annual plant belonging to subfamily Heliantheae and family Asteraceae (Compositae). Its vernacular names are as Gajar Ghas, ragweed, white cap or top, Gajari, Chatak Candani, Nakshtra Gida, Safed Topi etc. This weed has been rapidly spreading from the last two decades across the J&K and now this weed has attained the status of 'Worst Weed' because of its allopathic effects on different crops and harmful effects on human beings and animals.

It has been observed that its infestation causes crops yield losses up to 40 per cent in several crops and reduces fodder production up to 90 per cent. It is an aggressive annual herbaceous plant

which has been widely dispersed across J&K.

This weed rapidly covers the new surroundings and poses a serious threat to the environment and biodiversity of J&K.

This dangerous weed has been categorised as 'Cosmopolitan weed', 'National culprit' and 'National health hazard' due to its serious environmental threat.

Parthenium origin is considered to be Mexico. In India, its occurrence was first noticed in Pune (Maharashtra) in 1955 and now it has covered almost all parts of the country. It is supposed to be introduced in India from the United States of America along with wheat and other cereals import.

By 1972, it had dispersed into the majority of the Western states/UTs from Kashmir in the North to Kerala in the South. It has widely spread in India from Kargil region to Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar.

This weed grows at a faster rate due to its aggressiveness, high vitality of seeds, easily dispersal, innate dormancy and prolific seed producing nature. Any part of the plant (even root) can cause the subsequent risk of allergic reactions. In humans it causes health hazards like skin allergy (dermatitis), hay fever, asthma and bronchitis with flowers, seeds and even hair on leaves.

The skin becomes photosensitive making it hard for the patient to face the sunlight.

Bare parts of the body, soft tissues around the eyes and under joints are more likely to be effected by the contact dermatitis. Allergic papules are observed in school boys when they volunteered for uprooting parthenium. Animals are equally prone to the harmful effect of the weed.

During summer seasons, when the animals do not get palatable species in grazing lands, they are forced to feed on parthenium.

As a result milk taste becomes bitter and they suffer with ulcers in mouth and intestine. Whenever animals walk or graze through parthenium, their udders are inflamed and they suffer with fever and rashes. Histopathology of the kidney and liver revealed degenerative changes and necrosis.

Being toxic to livestock, causing both acute and chronic toxicity, a noticeable reduction in milk yield, tainting of milk with parthenin, de-pigmentation of skin, tainting in mutton and bitter taste of milk have been observed.

The milk consumption of the animals

grazing around parthenium invaded fields is hazardous to man. Some animals feeding on parthenium die due to acute dysentery, itching, cryhematosus, development of oedema around eyelids, dorsum of tongue, loss of hair etc. Parthenin is the chief chemical (0.3 per cent) found in the weed.

Community efforts involving all sections of the society are needed to manage the parthenium. Uprooting the weed manually when the soil is wet and slashing with word, collecting and burning the weed before flowering are some of the means of its manual control. Spraying of a solution of common salt (Sodium Chloride) at 15-20 per cent concentration has been found very effective.

Applications of herbicides like glyphosate (1-1.5 per cent) for total vegetation control or metribuzin (0.3-0.5 per cent) if grasses are to be saved in non-agricultural land are considered effective in preventing this weed spread. It can also be controlled by the use of bio agent Mexican beetle (Zygozamia bicolorata) as it is natural, self-sustaining, inexpensive and is ideally suited to non-crop situations and wastelands. This bio agent remains most active during rainy season and it completely controls the weed.

The plant species like Cassia tara, Cassia sericea, Amaranthus asper, Malva pusulata etc. have capability to replace parthenium.

The other way to manage parthenium is by uprooting it before flowering and make vermicompost by pit method. Vermicompost can be applied in different crops to mitigate the nutrients problems.

It can also be used in papermaking, an antifeedant and phagostimulants. National Research Centre for Weed Science, Jabalpur (MP) organises many awareness programmes on Parthenium eradication throughout the country by involving Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), institutes under ICAR, environmental agencies, NGOs etc. Parthenium eradication has become a challenge in J&K because of its epidemic proliferation and strong reproductive potential. This weed is spreading at an alarming rate in J&K and some strenuous and strategic efforts are needed to eradicate this menace so as to improve the production and productivity of different crops. Both public and private organizations need to work together to manage this obnoxious weed.

(The author is Head, KVK Reasi, SKUAST-J).

August 21- National Senior Citizens Day

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

Being is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception till the death of an individual. However, the age at which one's productive contribution declines and one tends to be economically dependent can probably be treated as the onset of the aged stage of life. National Elderly Policy defines people in the 60+ age group as elderly. It is always said many times that we need to respect our elders. In fact, this is a phrase that most children hear throughout their lives. Elders bring so much to the world. They offer their experience, their wisdom, and their knowledge. For centuries, cultures across the globe have looked to older people in the communities in order to provide them with knowledge and wisdom.

In times of trouble or when we need some advice and direction, we always rely on older people to impart their great wisdom on us. Their valuable contributions to communities create better places to live. A community is known by the way it treats its vulnerable section of society, the elders. Traditionally, in India, it has been a part of our culture for the society and the family to care for elders. Senior citizens are held in high esteem and given priority and respect in all matters. By virtue of the long experience, they carry; they can well be christened as treasury troves of society. But it is felt that owing to transformation in our attitude it is hard reality that between the broad smiles, behind the cheerful exterior and in those moist, rheumy eyes of our elders, lies an untold story - A tale of loneliness, anxiety, fear and uncertainty that senior citizens leave untold. Senior citizens do not get the attention and help they deserve.

All India Senior Citizens Federation estimates that seven out of every 10 senior citizens in the country live in poverty. Of the more than 100 million senior citizens, 70 million have retired from the unorganized sector and have no pension or social security.

To recognize their achievements, to raise awareness about issues affecting them and to show appreciation to seniors, President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan in 1988 dedicated 21st August to older adults and their issues and the day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14, 1990 as 'World Senior Citizen Day' now observed annually.

The day encourages supporting senior citizens to live their lives to the fullest and as independently as possible.

SENIOR CITIZENS DAY August 21



With age comes different lifestyle choices and requirements, and this is especially true for senior citizens. For seniors, this can be a daunting and sometimes overwhelming task. But if the right fit is found, it can be extremely beneficial to the individual's overall standard of living. Some opportunities that are catered towards this age group offer plenty of great opportunities but when we traverse the pages earmarked for such opportunities in India, we find such facilities and programs by the governments on papers just to show case that they are much concerned about this category of society.

The present government squeezed the oldies pocket especially those retired from government services during the corona when money was much required by this fraternity to meet up with corona complications by confiscating four DA installments. Withdrawal of concessions on Railway fare to senior citizens is one of the shameful bounties of the present Government on the pretext of Corona whereas crores are spent for creating vote banks.

The French asset management company, Natixis Global in its Global Retirement Index Report has ranked India at the lowest position in a survey about the best place to retire after work among a list of 43 countries. The ranking was based on eighteen indicators which had four essential factors in mind such as: The material means to live comfortably in retirement, access to quality financial services to help preserve savings value and maximize access to quality health services and income, and a clean and safe environment.

While India ranked the lowest, England and Switzerland topped the list.

If we traverse the pages of legal weapons available that can come to the rescue of abandoned parents, we find: Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act,

1956. Section 20 of the Act entitles parents to claim maintenance from their son and daughter, if they are unable to maintain themselves.

Muslim Personal Law also speaks of bounden duty on son and daughters to maintain their parents if they are unable to do so. Section 125 of The Code of Criminal Procedure 1873, also provides relief for deserted parents to seek maintenance through Court.

In 2007, the Parliament passed the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act. The Act makes it a legal obligation for children and heirs to provide maintenance to senior citizens and parents, by monthly allowance.

It also provides a simple, speedy and inexpensive mechanism for the protection of life and property of the older persons. The Act makes it mandatory on the State Government that it must ensure that all government hospitals and hospitals partly or fully funded by the government arrange separate queues for senior citizens and provide beds for all senior citizens. Additionally, every district hospital must have special facilities for senior citizens. Every district must have at least one old age home for senior citizens who are poor and needy.

Here the Government has a responsibility to embrace, uphold and protect the rights of senior citizens, as enshrined in the Act. But alas there is absolutely nothing on ground that a senior citizen should feel proud of. Come what may, we must strive for the intergenerational connection, so that younger generations can benefit from the experience, knowledge and wisdom of older citizens. Bridging the intergenerational gap also helps us to ensure that there is continuity in knowledge production.

(The author is President, Senior Citizens' Club Udhampur).

PROGRESSING J&K
SVAMITVA giving seamless access to revenue records
Srinagar-first district in country to achieve 100 pc saturation

The issuance of property cards under SVAMITVA Scheme is going on in full swing across all districts of J&K with an objective of empowering villagers and landowners. The SVAMITVA is giving seamless access to landowners regarding their revenue records of properties, obviating the dependence on human interface. SVAMITVA is like a property card with legal sanctity, an authoritative source reflective of record of ownership/possession. The scheme encompassing the length and breadth of the Union Territory involves the use of the most modern technology for surveys, extraction of data and final compilation of the records for public use. These are latest initiatives in the government of India's reforms in Land Records. The technology based scheme is changing rural landscape in terms of quick and convenient access to the land owners, especially those living in Abadi-Deh. The initiative also helps in eliminating corruption and hence, it is another step towards people-friendly, transparent, corruption-free governance as promised to people of J&K. Notably, Srinagar district has become the first district in the country to achieve 100 percent saturation under the Survey of Villages Abadi & Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) Yojna. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha while tweeting on the development said that the Srinagar district has become the first district in the country to achieve 100 percent property cards generation/distribution to the landowners. SVAMITVA is a Central Sector Scheme of Ministry of Panchayati Raj, launched nation-wide by the Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day, April 2021 after successful completion of pilot phase of scheme (2020-2021) in